MoDOT Guard Cable Talking Points

(Updated August 2007)

The Crash Problem

- Cross-median crashes occur when a vehicle crosses the median and enters the opposing traffic lane, vehicles hit head-on at high speeds. Because of the nature of the crash, this type is more likely than most to result in fatalities and serious injuries.

- Between 1996 and 2005, over 400 people were killed and over 2400 were injured in cross median crashes on Interstates 44, 55 and 70 in Missouri.

The Solution

- System-wide installation of guard cable on Missouri highways began in 2003.

- Guard cable is currently installed on Missouri interstates with high traffic volumes and a history of cross median severe crashes.

- 450 miles of median guard cable have been installed statewide through 2006. The total cost for these installations is approximately $45 million.

- Installation costs are approximately $100,000 per mile. Maintenance costs range from $6,000 to $12,000 per mile per year, based on the number of times the cable is hit.

- Interstates 70 and 44 have some sort of barrier (guard cable, concrete, or a very wide median) for their entire length.

Effectiveness

- A study completed in 2006 showed that guard cable installations in Missouri succeeded in stopping cars from crossing into the opposing lanes of traffic 95 percent of the time.

- Guard cables are not designed to prevent large vehicles, such as tractor-trailers, from crossing the median. However, there have been several cases where the stretchable cable has averted large vehicles from entering the opposing lane of traffic.

- On Interstate 70 there were 24 fatalities involving cars that crossed over the median in 2002. In 2006, after guard cable was completed on I-70, there were only **two** cross-median fatalities.

- The number of cross-median fatalities on ALL interstates was reduced from 50 to 26 between 2005 and 2006.